

Sketch

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Rat Story

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Abstract

I work hard all day in the sun...

Rat Story

Dwaine Marvick



I WORK hard all day in the sun. Then I run home with my body. I set it in this chair. I try to forget it. . . I reach to the table, draw an ash-tray near. It's a round-topped, three-legged table. It breaks the base of a right angle made by the lounge and the armchair. The room is superlaminated with triangles; it arranges itself into series of those geometric figures. The doorway intrudes in a corner; obvious pathways angle acutely from it.

It's an ordinary room. No one planned it as a sacrifice to Mathematics. It's only a byproduct of streamlined production. It's exhibit B in the case against the dialectic. Exhibit A? Why, that's us. Millions of little maniacs running earnestly around and around the cycle of their daily lives. If this is a rat-race, aren't you a rat? Ha! You're a fat old rat. My friends and I are life members in the antique clan and brotherly fraternity of Rodents.

We're all blind mice. We go around sniffing in corners for scandal or food or a hole. Me too. What good is mere enthusiasm?

Once a man in China said, "That whereby men differ from the lower animals is but small. The mass of people cast it away, while the superior man preserves it."

I threw it away. I didn't know it was valuable.

I want it now. But here on my knees in the street I'm hungry for cheese.

—Dwaine Marvick

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apron-clad scientists handle the tongs and test tubes with second-quarter efficiency. They say our bodies are 65% oxygen, and our minds and hearts are a marvel of colloidal dispersion.